

جميلة الحظا الغني

## The Art of Arabic Calligraphy



- **Islamic Art and Arabic Calligraphy**
- **General Features of Arabic Calligraphy**
- **Development of Arabic Script & Calligraphy**
- **Primary Styles, Samples & Features**
- **Calligraphy & Architecture**
- **Calligraphy & Fine Art**
- **New Techniques & Applications**

## Elements of Islamic Art:

- Arabic Script & Calligraphy
- Geometric Patterns
- Floral & Vegetal Motifs (Arabesque)



Jamal Badran, 1980's  
Decorations on Glass



# The Art of Arabic Calligraphy

جميلة الخط العربي



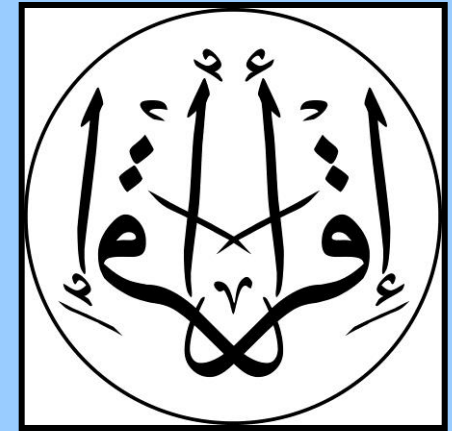
**Al-Hambra Palace**



**Candlestick**

## The Art of Arabic Calligraphy:

- The Art of the Pen
- The Art of Writing
- Geometry of the Spirit
- Geometry of the line



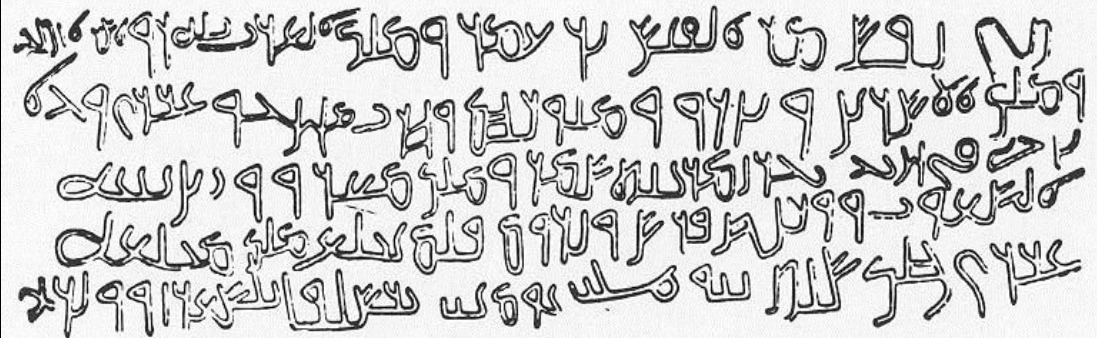
## How Writing Became an Art Form:

- The Revelation of the *Qur'an* as an inspiration
- To glorify the words of God – visually as in recitation
- The discouragement of representing human figures



## Development of Arabic Script:

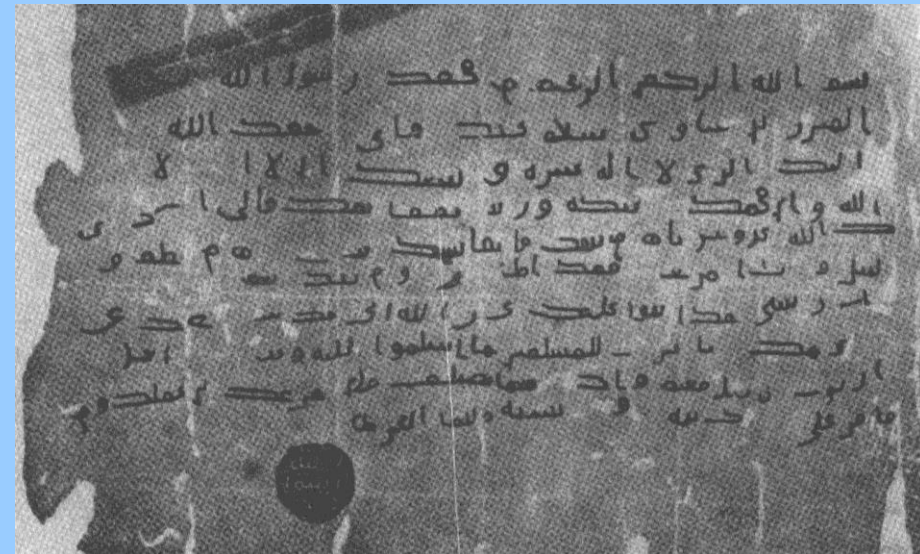
- The Arabic Script was developed from the *Nabataean* script, which was itself derived from the Aramaic script.
- As a writing system, Arabic appeared in early 5<sup>th</sup> Century.
- The revelation of Islam had a major impact on the development of Arabic language & Script.



Funerary inscription from an-Namara (AD 328), speaking of the famous pre-Islamic poet Imru l-Qays.

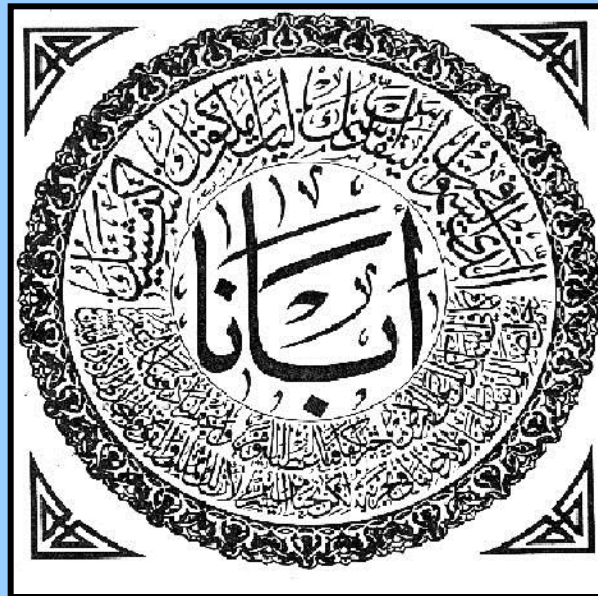
## Islam & Arabic Calligraphy:

- First Revelation of the Qur'an & Other verses
- Teaching Arabic writing in the first mosque
- The 40 scribes that recorded the Qur'an
- The release of Prisoners of war for teaching others
- The collection and copying of the Qur'an.



## Calligraphy Applications:

- To Glorify & Beautify God's words
- As a form of worship
- As a spiritual activity
- Artistic
- Decoration
- Identity

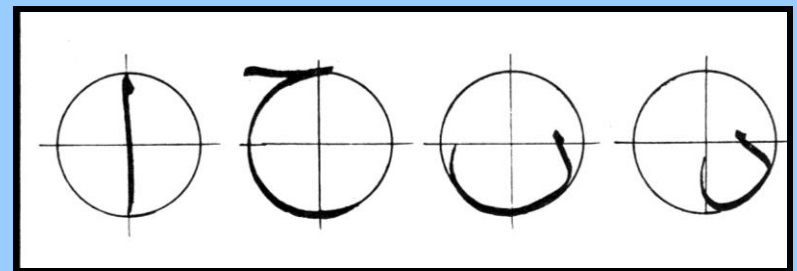
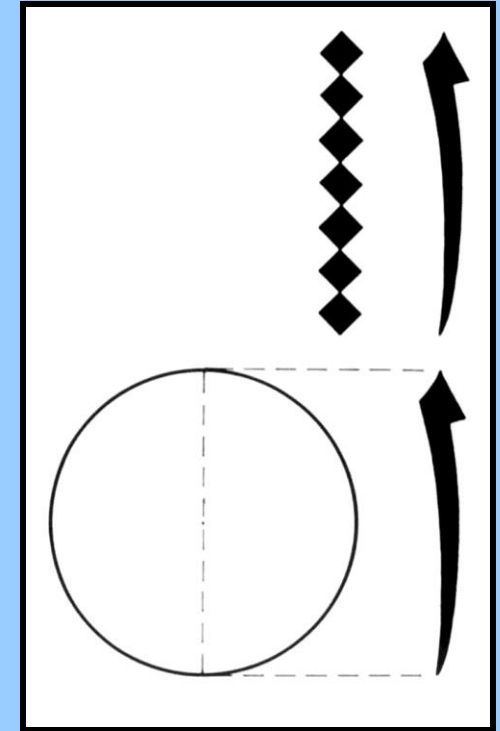




## Geometric Principles:

Three elements are the basis of proportion in Arabic Calligraphy:

- The height of the *alif*, which is a straight and vertical stroke (3-12) dots.
- The width of the *alif*, (the dot) which is the square impression formed by pressing the tip of the calligrapher's reed pen to paper
- An imaginary circle with *alif* as its diameter, within which all Arabic letters could fit and be written.



*System of Ibn-Muqla, 9<sup>th</sup> Century*

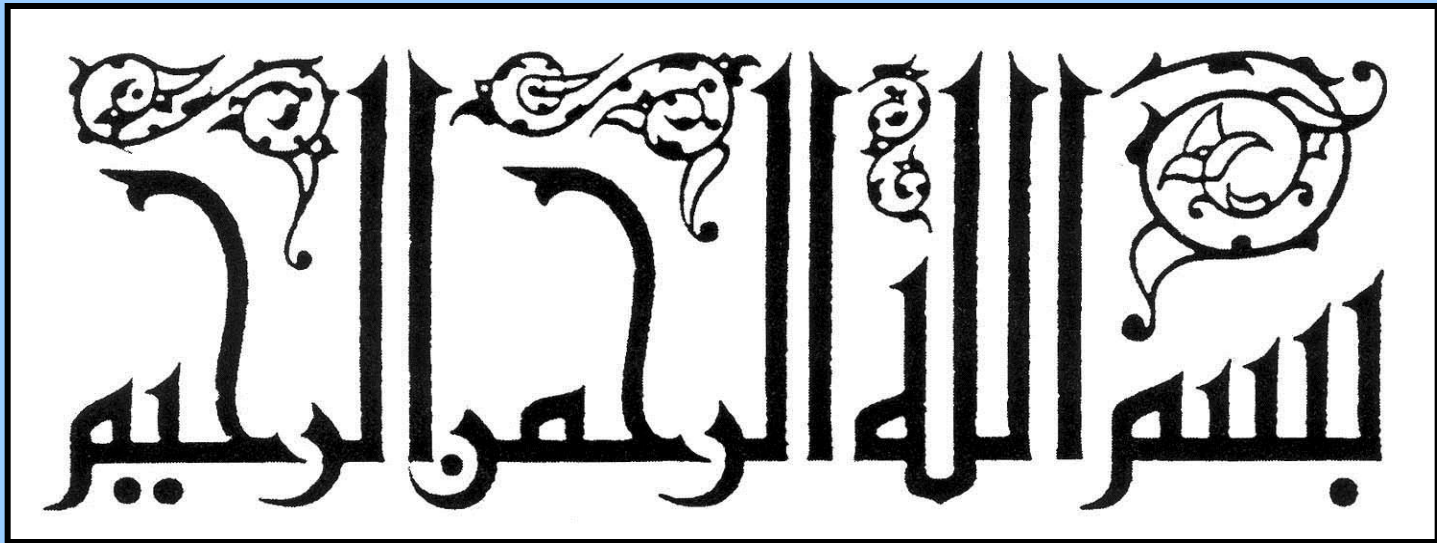
## Primary Styles

- Over 100 Styles
  - 6 Primary Styles
  - Additional Artistic forms
- Named based on:
- width of the pen - *Thuluth*
  - usage - *Nasakh*
  - curvature of style - *Yabis*
  - place of development— *Kufi*
  - the name of creator - *Yaquti*

Kufic or Kufi	الخط الكوفي
Thuluth	خَطُ الثُلُثِ
Nasakh	خَطُ النَّسْخِ
Ta'liq or Farsi	خط التعليق
Deewani	الخط الديواني
Riq'a or Ruq'a	خط الرقعة
Tughra'	الطغراء
Zoomorphic	



***Kufi* or *Kufic*:** is noted for its proportional measurements, angularity, and squareness. *Kufic* is one of the earliest styles to be used to record the word of God in the *Qur'an*. One of the early *kufic* inscriptions can be seen inside the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem.

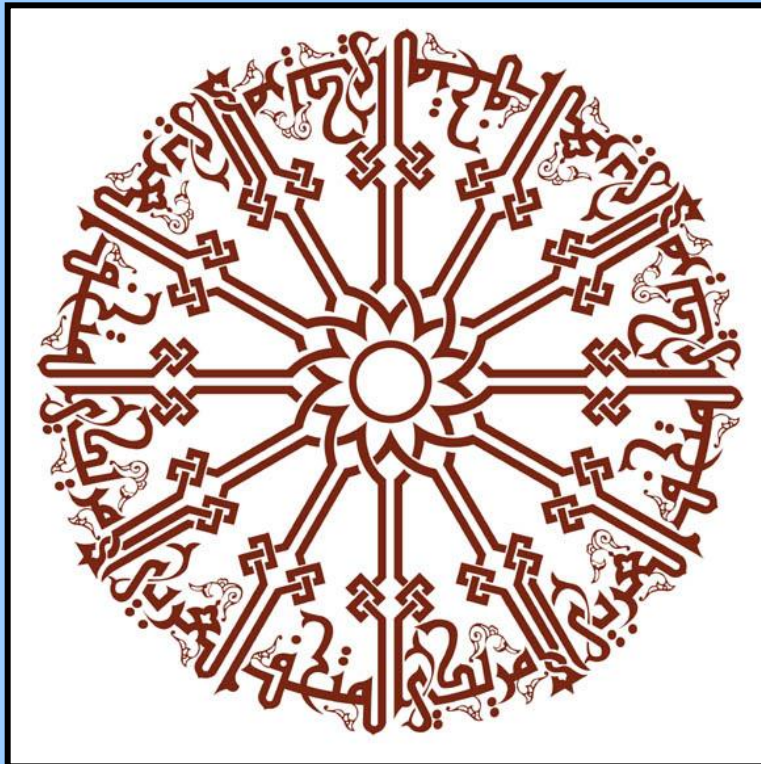




# The Art of Arabic Calligraphy

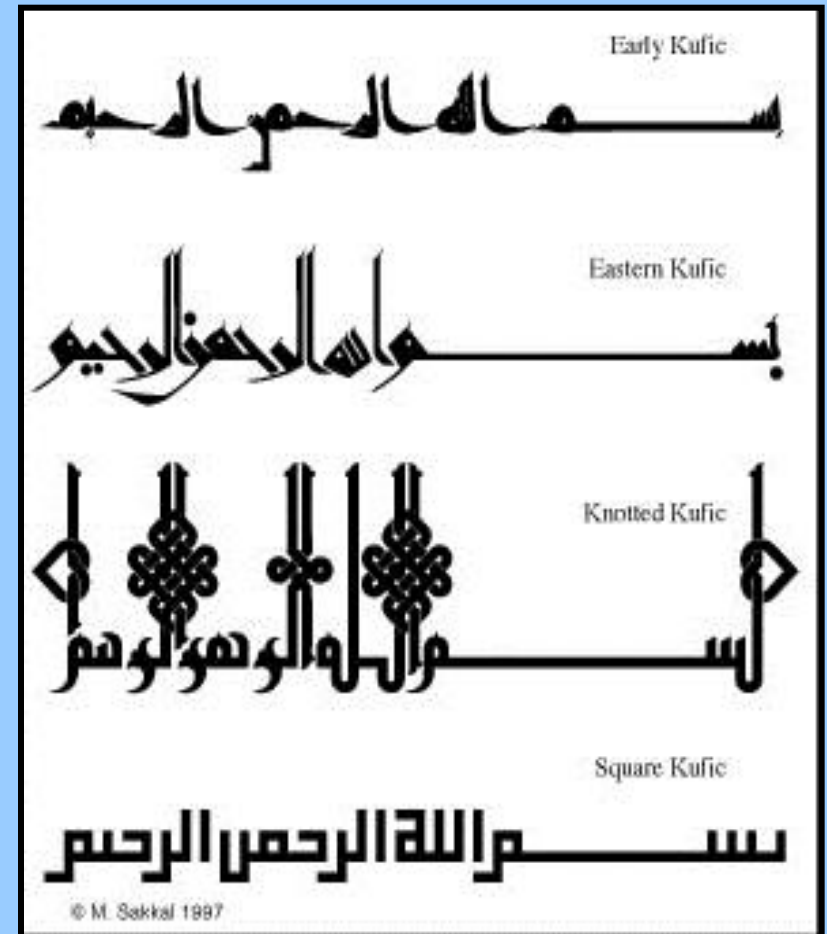
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## Variations of Kufic Style:



Fayeq Oweis, 2005

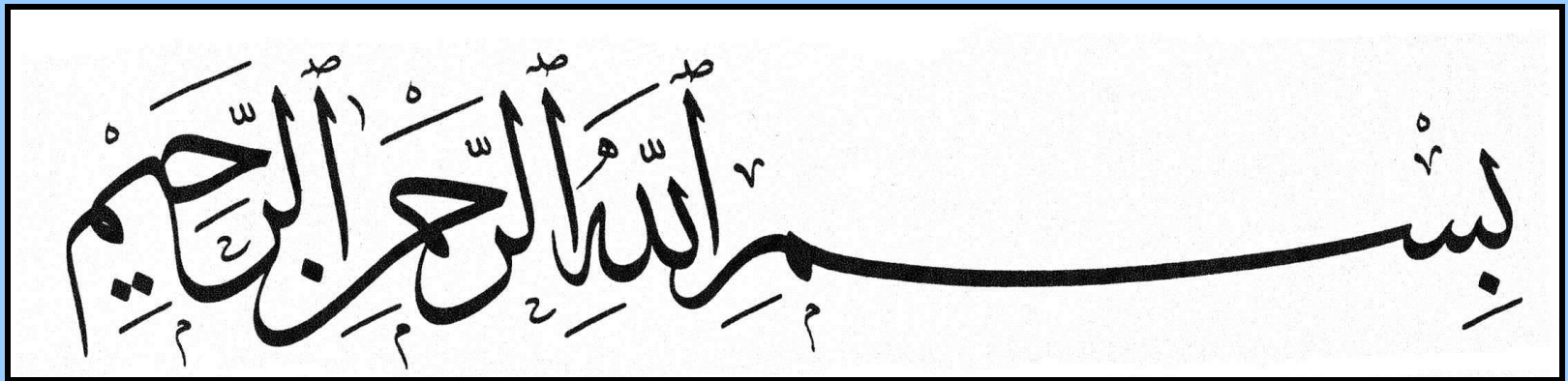
Arab American National Museum



Source: [www.sakkal.com](http://www.sakkal.com)

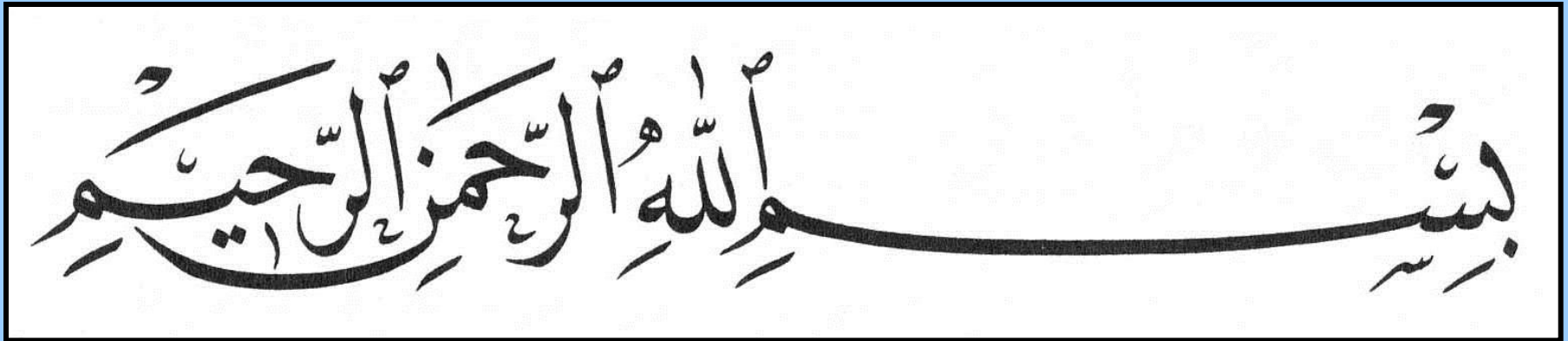


*Thuluth* means “one third,” referring to the proportion of the pen in relation to a previous style called *Tumaar*. It was first formulated in the 7th century A.D., and fully developed in the 9th century. It is noted for its cursive letters and its use as an ornamental script.





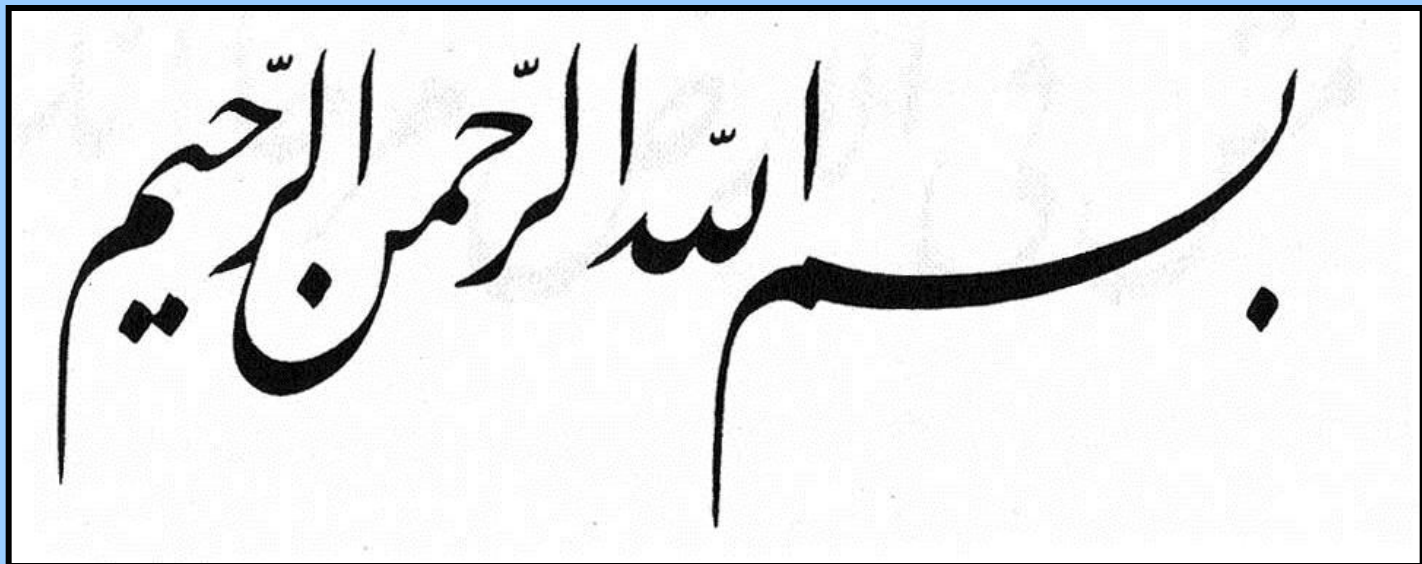
*Nasakh* means “copy” in Arabic, is one of the earliest scripts, redesigned by *Ibn Muqlah* in the 10th century A.D., using a comprehensive system of proportion. It is noted for its clarity to read and write, and was used to copy the Qur'an.





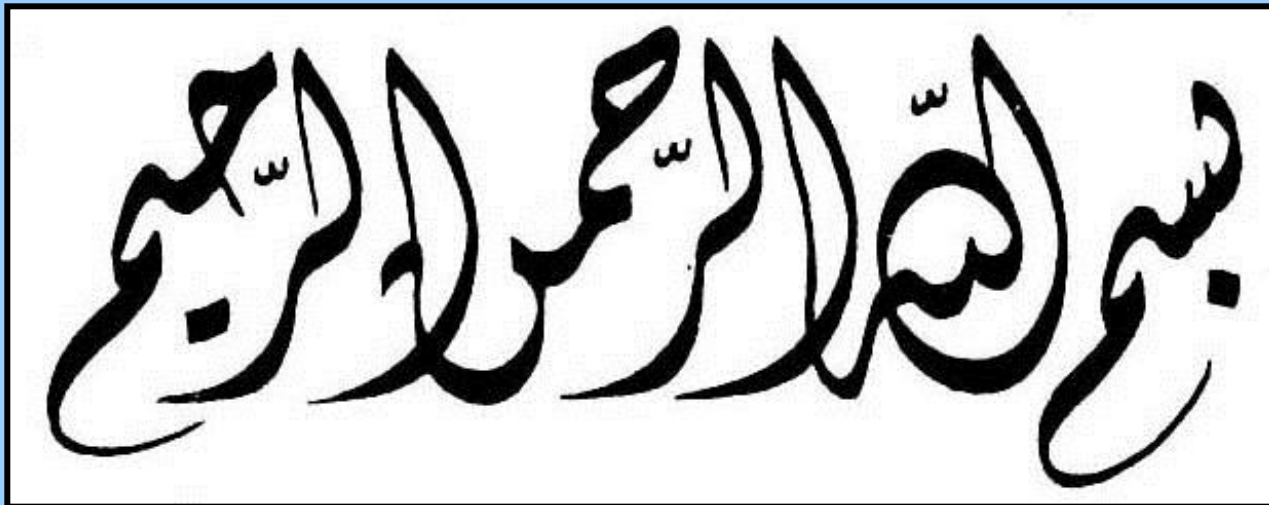
## خط التعليق

***Ta'liq*** means “hanging,” referring to the shape of the letters, is a cursive script developed by the Persians in the early part of the 9th century A.D., and it is also called *Farsi* (Persians).





***Diwani*** was developed by the Ottomans from the *Ta'liq* style. This style became a favorite script for writing in the Ottoman chancellery, and its name was derived from the word “Diwan,” which means the “Royal Court.”



## خط الرقعة

*Riq'a* is a style that has evolved from *Nasakh* and *Thuluth*. It is noted for its simplicity and its short horizontal stems. The word *Riq'a* means “a small sheet,” which could be an indication of the media on which it was originally created.

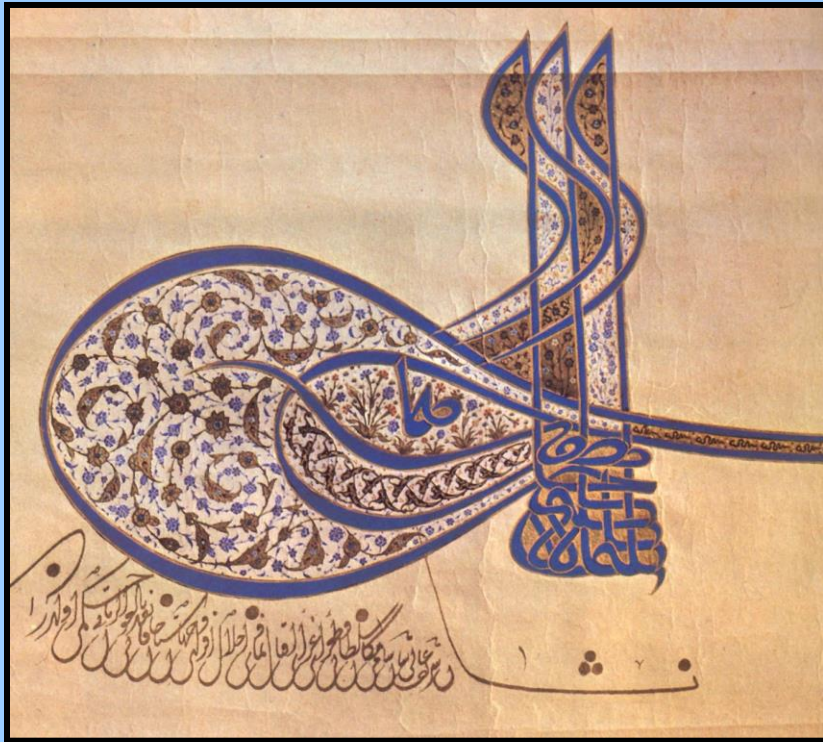




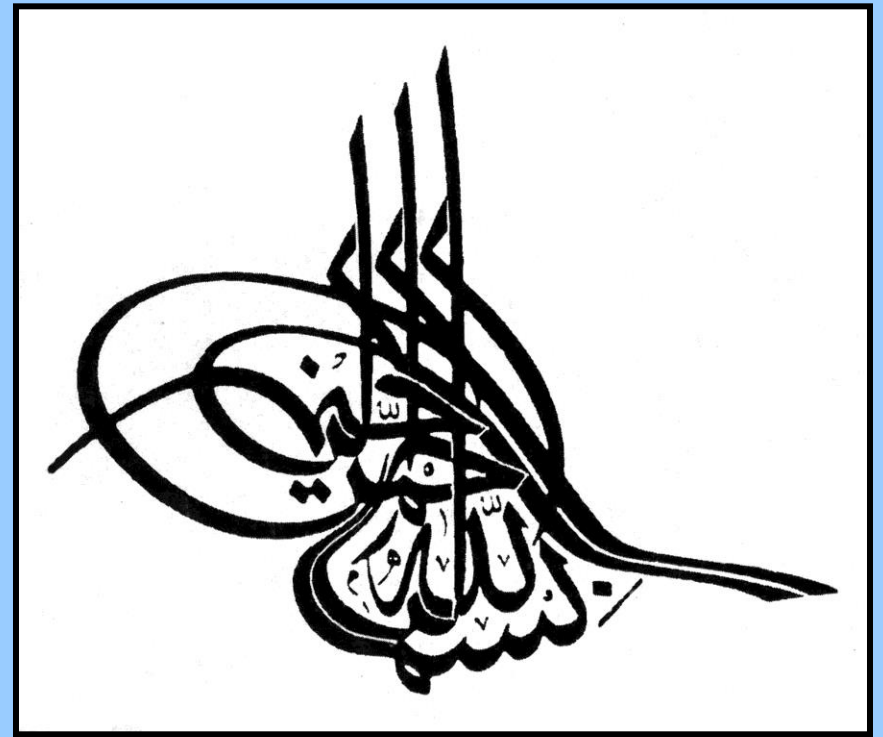
# The Art of Arabic Calligraphy

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*Tughra'* was used by the Ottoman sultans as their signature. It was supposed to be impossible to imitate.

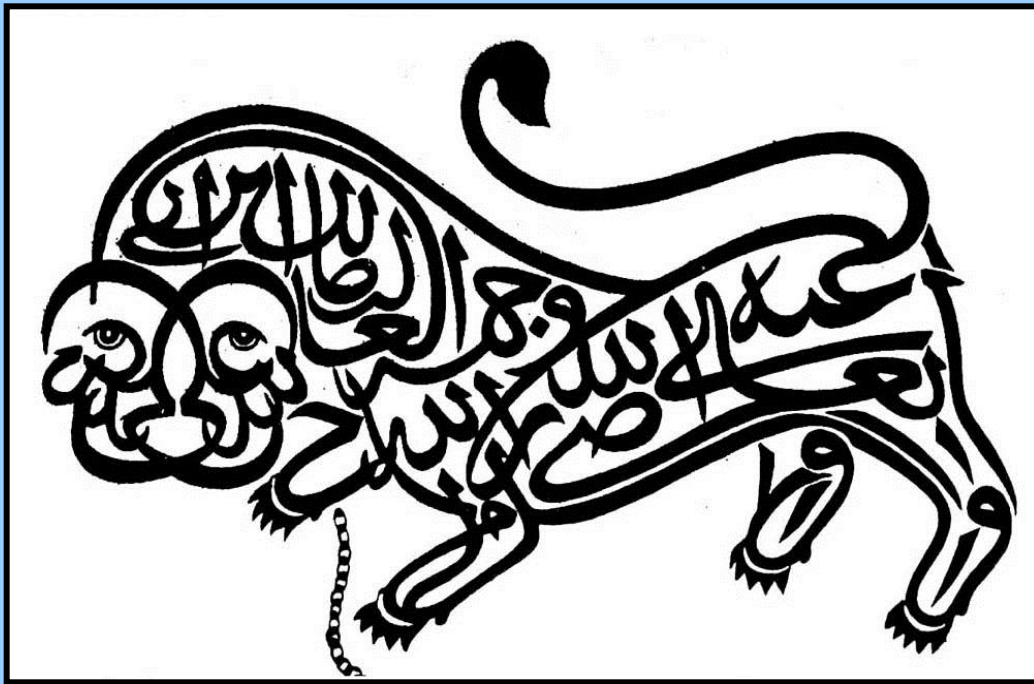


*Signature of an Ottoman Sultan*



*Basmallah in Tughra' style*

**Pictorial Calligraphy:** words are manipulated and structured into the shape of a human figure, a bird, an animal or an object.



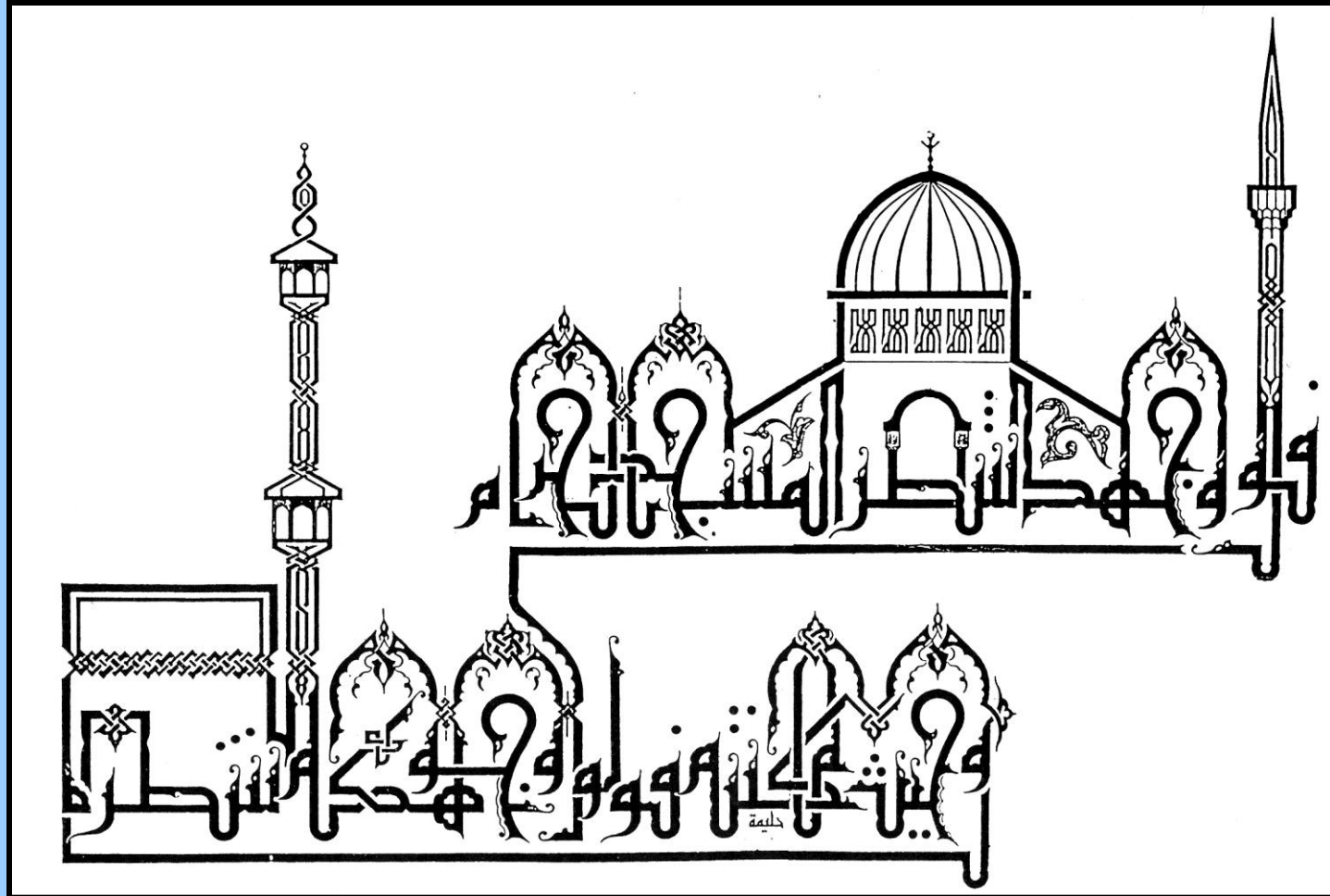
Prayer in a form of a Lion

*"Ali bin abi Talib, the victorious lion of God,  
may God be pleased with him"*



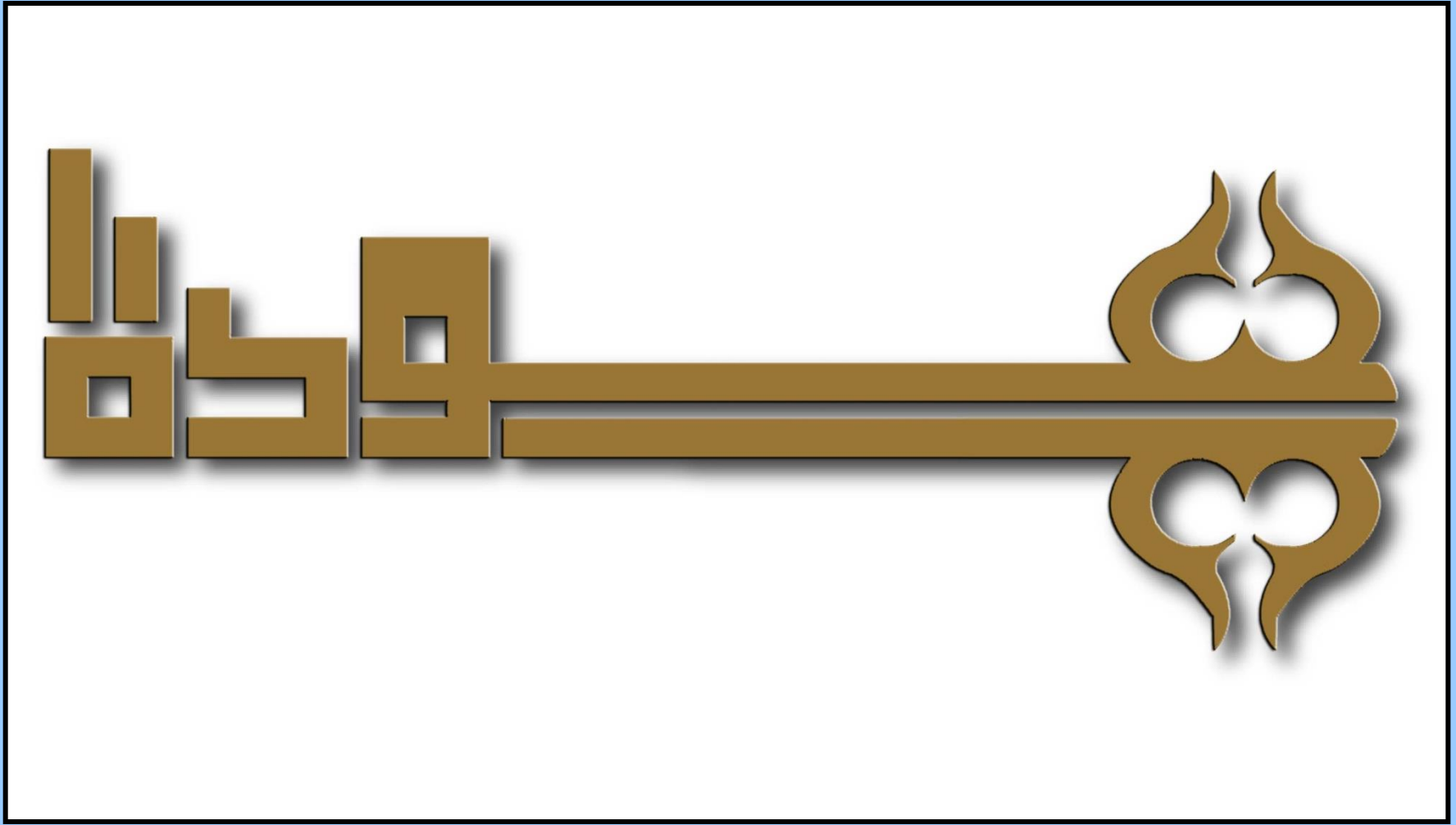
Prayer in a form of a human figure

*"I testify that there is no god, but God  
and Muhammad is a messenger of God"*

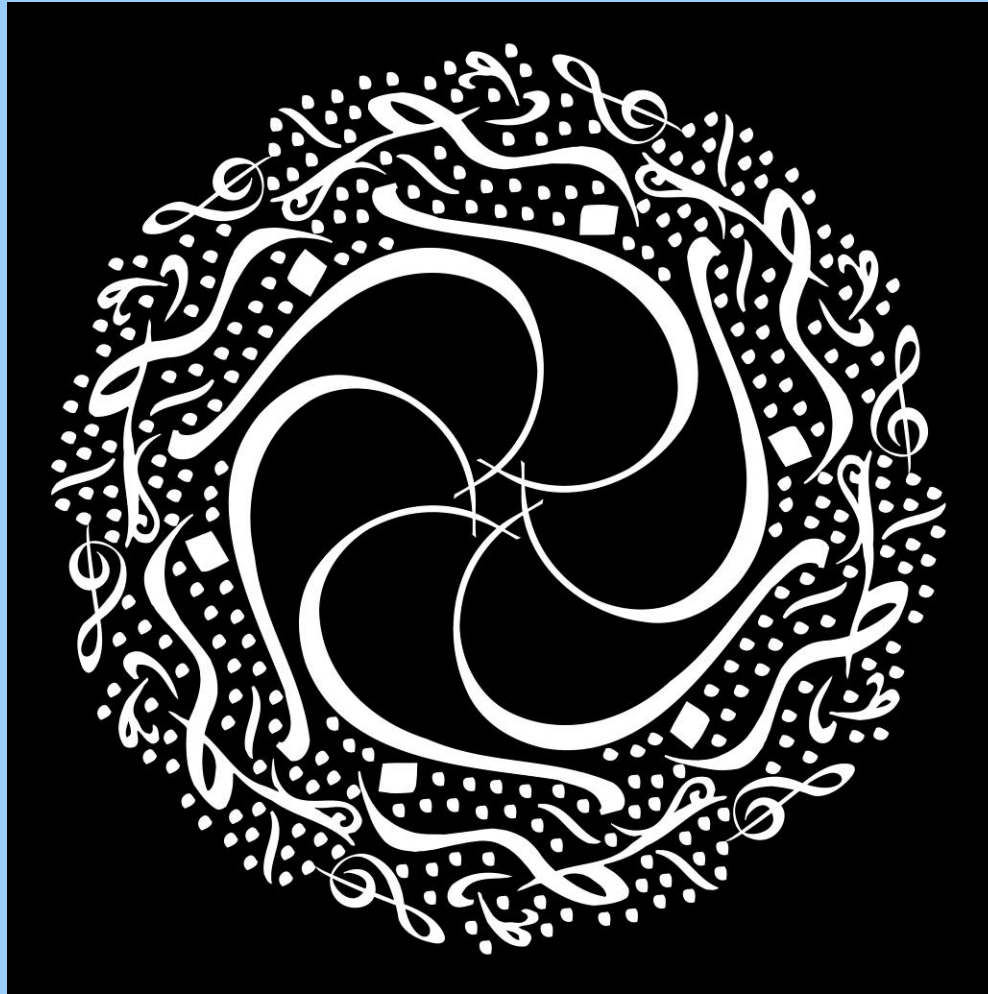


**Qur'anic verse in the shape of a mosque**





Awda (Return) by Faye Oweis, 2006



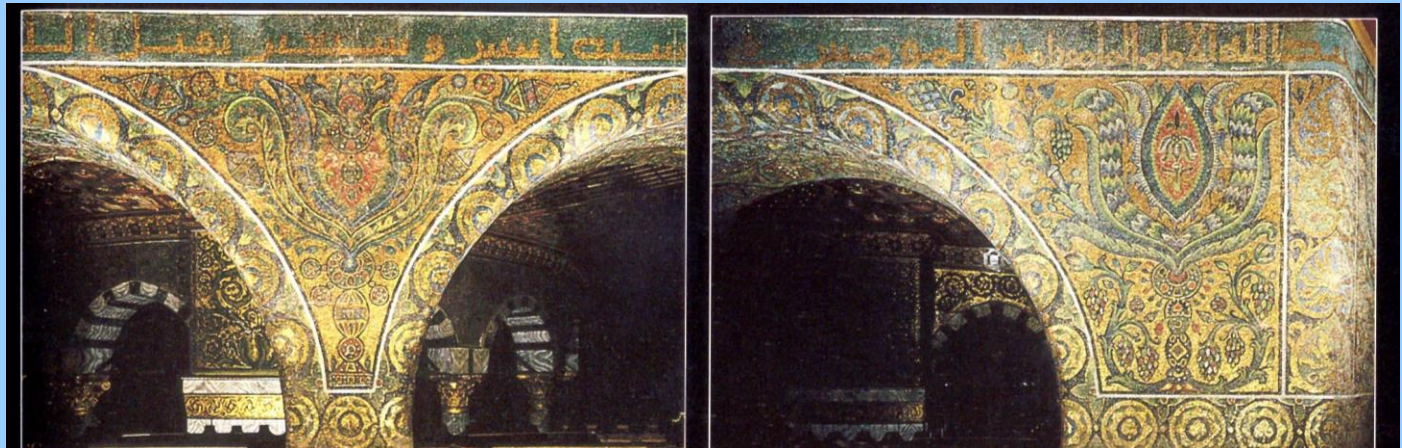
Tarab (Joy/delight). Faye Oweis, 2006

## Calligraphy & Architecture

**A major application of Arabic Calligraphy is in Architecture where inscriptions provided:**

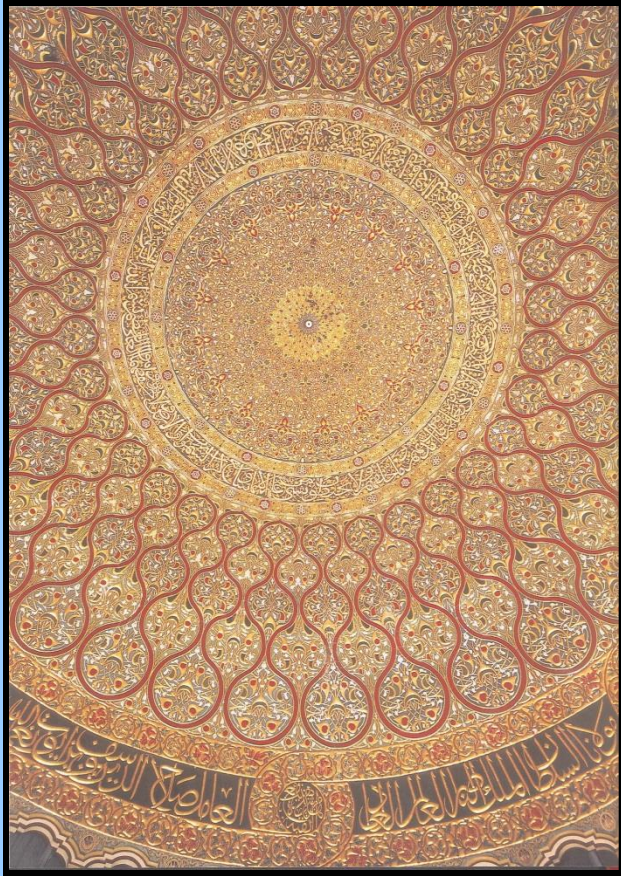
- Place Identity and Function (mosque, school, etc.)
- Historical Information (dates, artists, ruler, etc.)
- Spiritual (Qur'anic verses and prayers)
- Artistic/ Decoration

**Original Kufic inscriptions in the Dome of the Rock Jerusalem, 692 AD**





## Arabic Calligraphy in Mosques



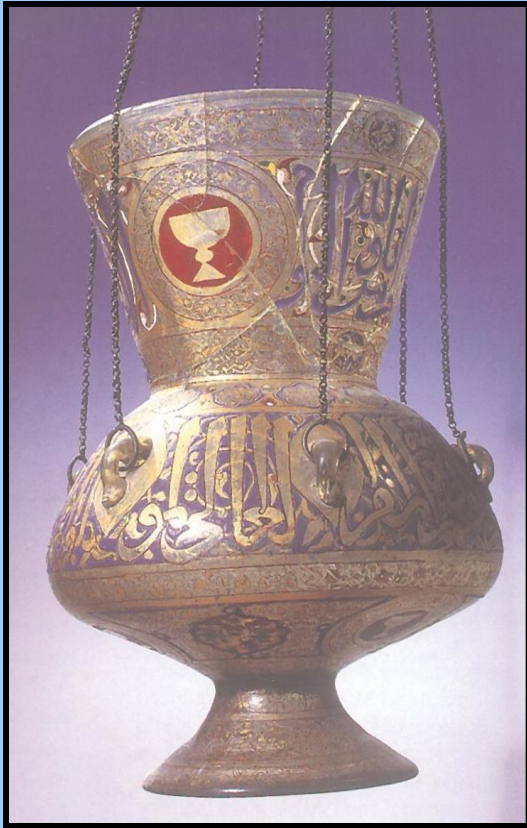
**The Dome of the Rock**



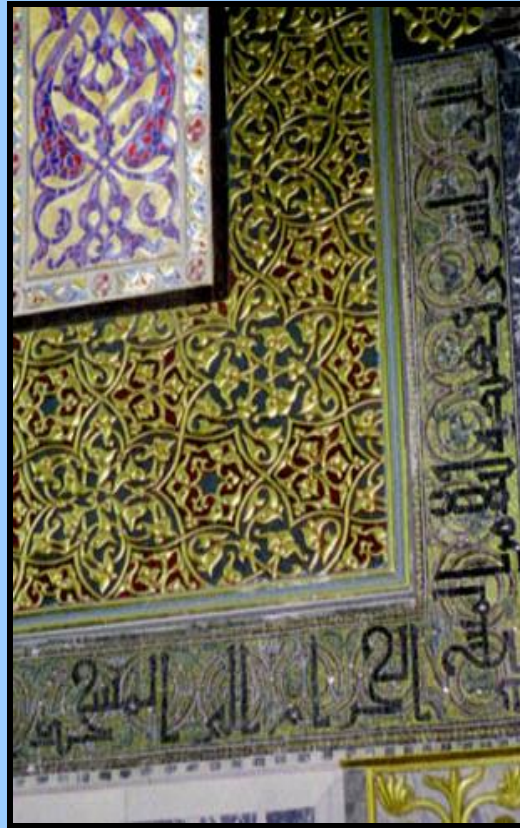
**Minbar & Mihrab - Mosque of University of Jordan**



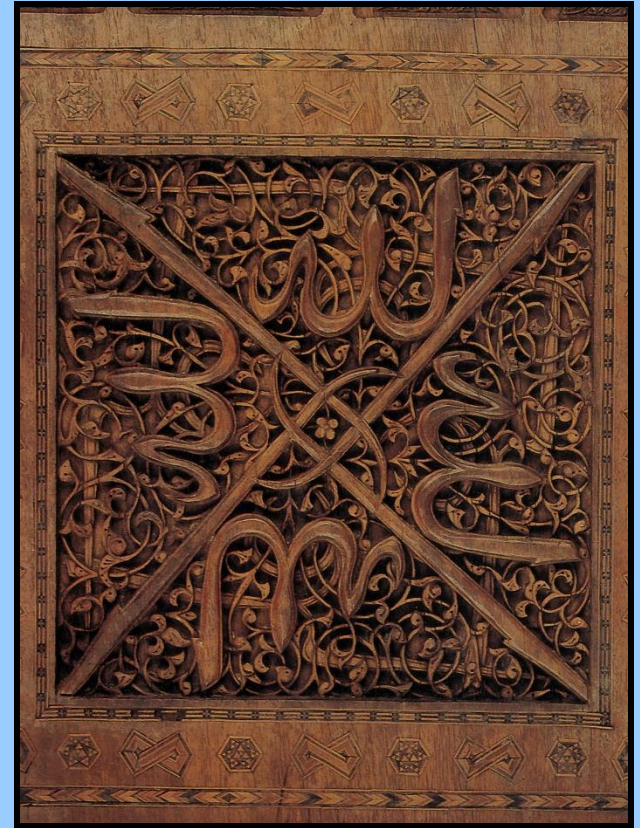
## Calligraphy & Diversity of Materials



**Glass**



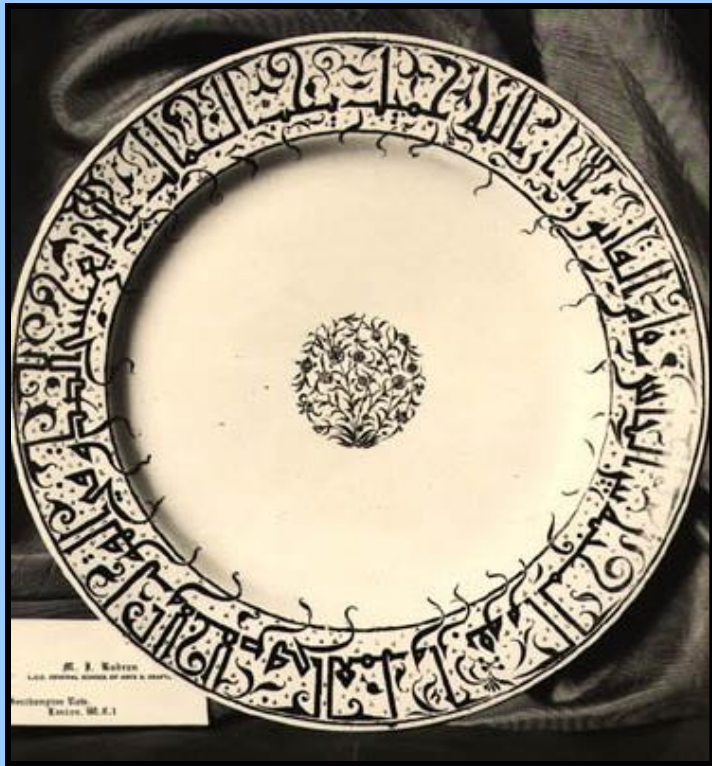
**Mosaics**



**Wood**



## Calligraphy & Diversity of Materials



Ceramic



Plaster

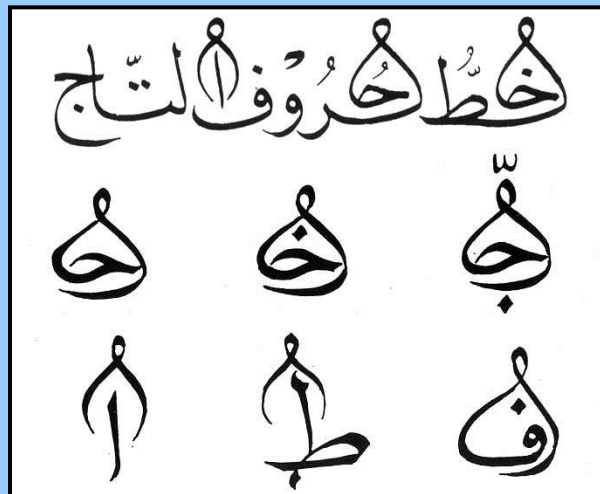


Leather

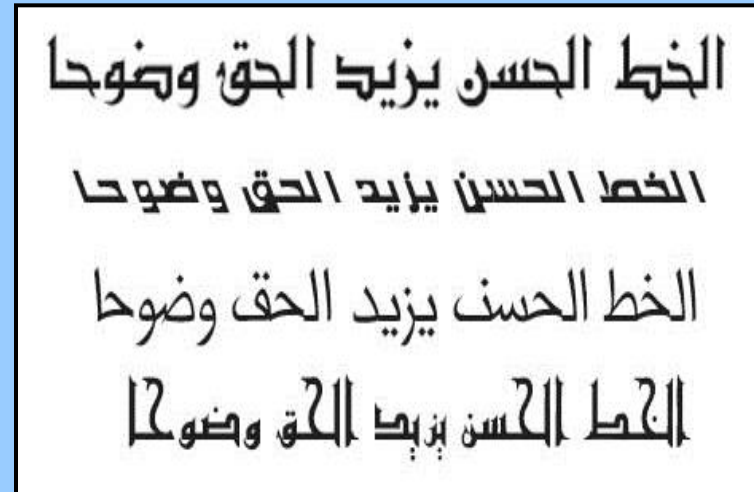
## Contemporary Development

**For over a century, there has been no major development in Arabic Calligraphy, except:**

- Development of new type styles – for printing
- The use of Digital Media
- Incorporating Calligraphy in Fine Arts

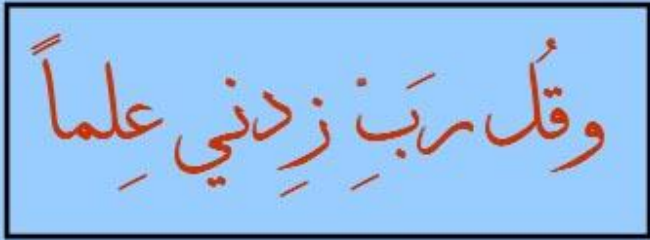


Crown Letters- Egypt 1925



Computer Fonts

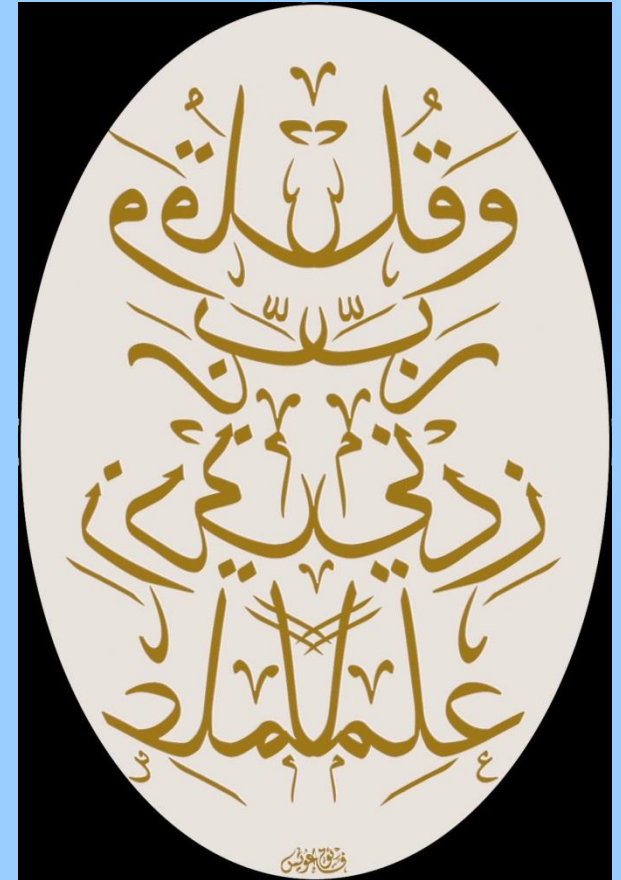
## Computers & Calligraphy



Computer type using *DecoType Thuluth*  
Style for Windows OS :

Functional with no aesthetic

Computer Manipulation:  
Applying Calligraphy Rules

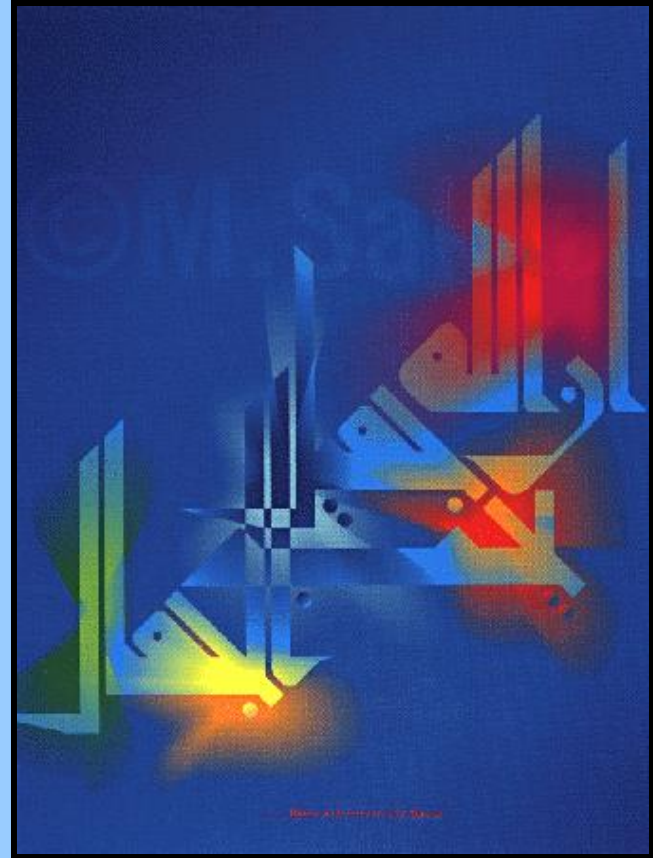




## Calligraphy and Fine Art



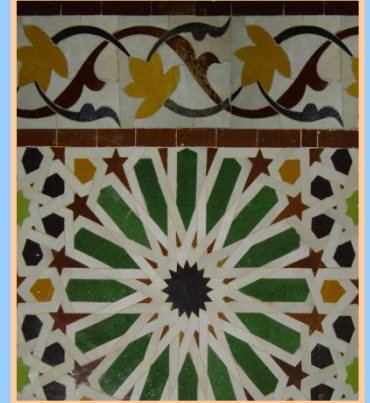
**Steps and Shadows**  
by Mamoun Sakkal



**God is Beautiful and Loves Beauty**  
by Mamoun Sakkal

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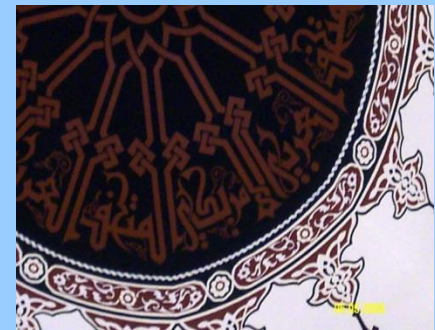
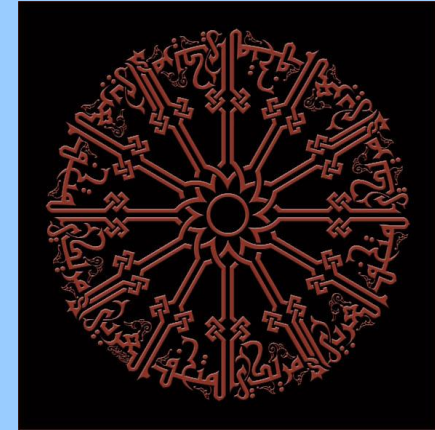


Arab American National Museum- Front Entrance, 25'x16' – Mosaics  
Dearborn, Michigan, May 2005. Implemented by Mosaics House- Morocco



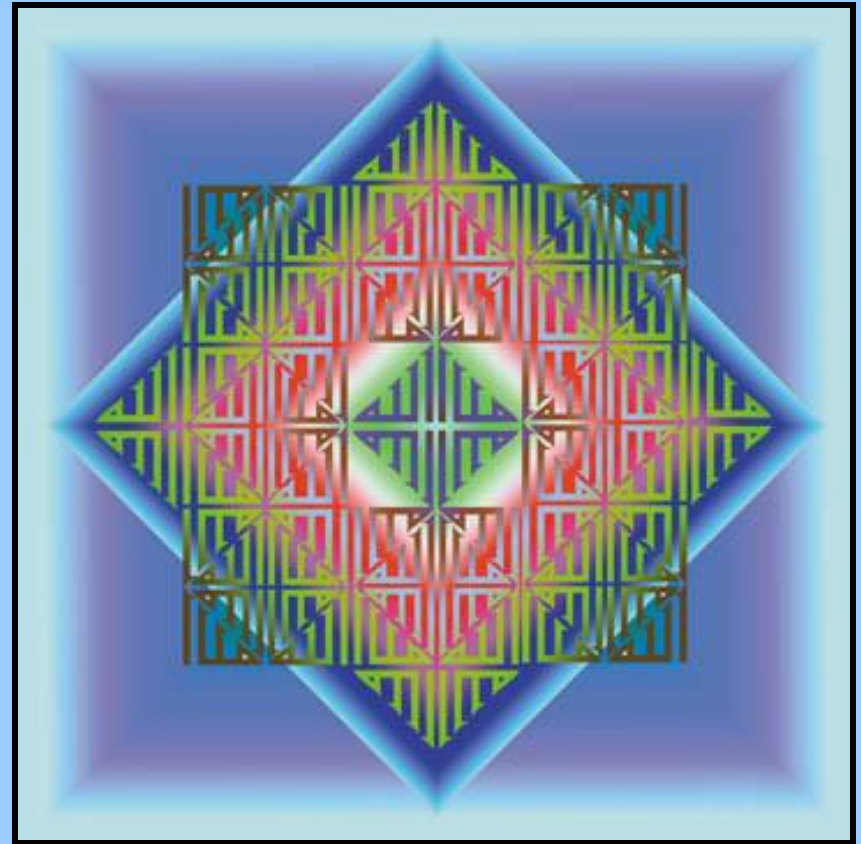
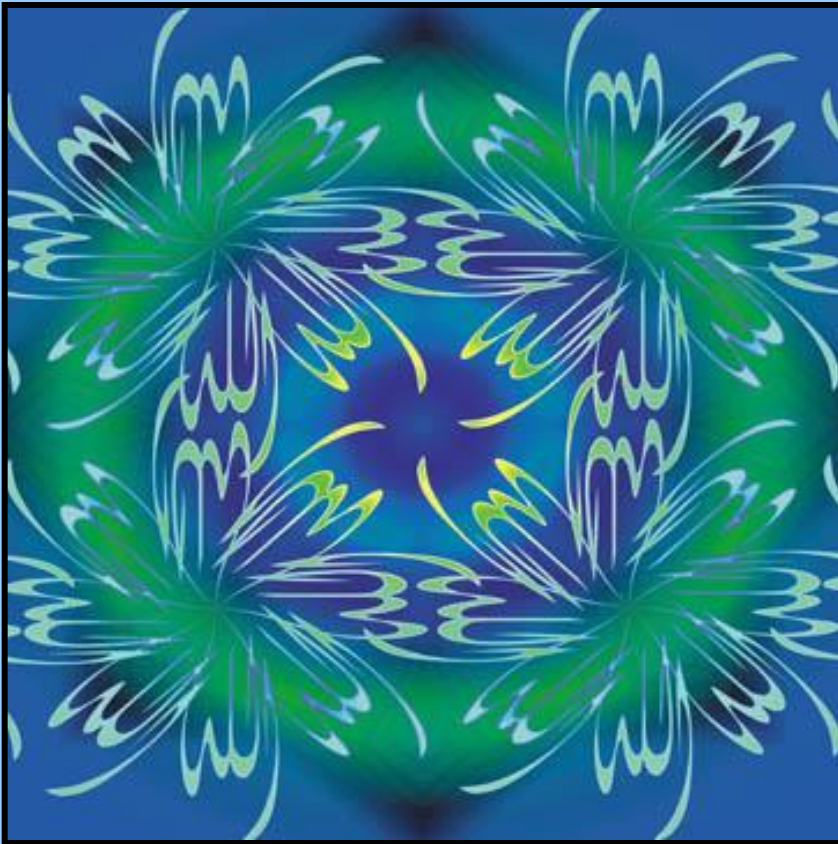
# The Art of Arabic Calligraphy

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Arab American National Museum  
Calligraphy of the Dome, 30' Diameter- Acrylic Dearborn, Michigan. May 2005.

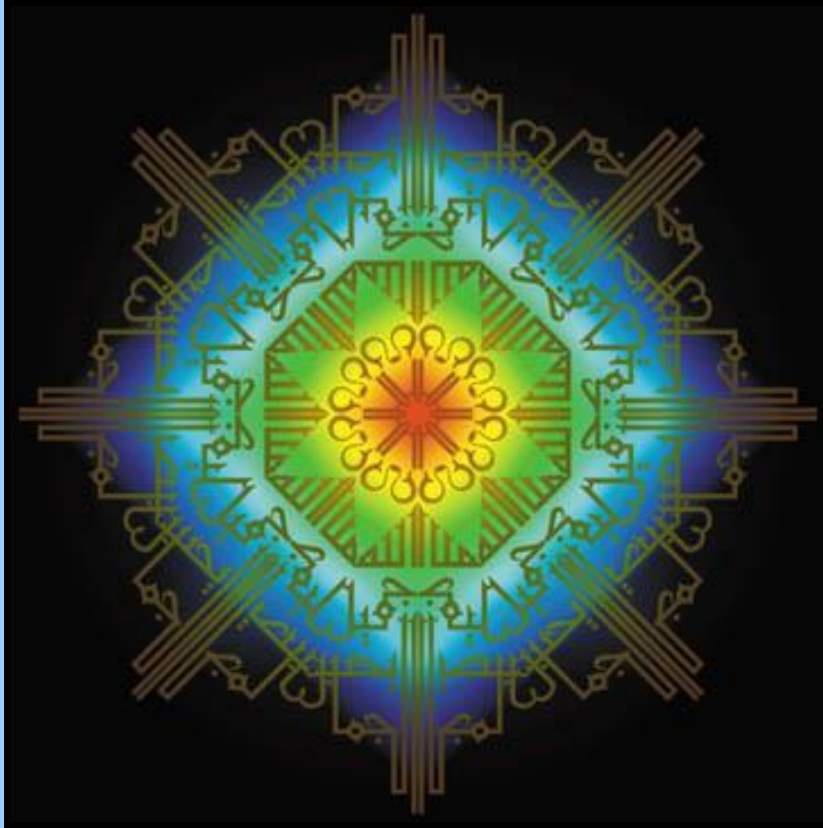
## Calligraphy and Fine Art



Fayeq Oweis, 2001. Allah “series”



## Calligraphy and Fine Art



Allah Jameel *"God is Beautiful and loves beauty"*



Allah Noor *"God is the light of heavens and earth"*



Adaala (Justice)

Arabic Calligraphy & Digital Prints from Two series  
“Visual Interpretation of Arabic Words & Letters”  
to be presented at the Arab American National Museum, April 2006

Lets try  
this

حُب و سلام

Peace

and

Love





Love & Peace by Faye Oweis, 2003

# The Art of Arabic Calligraphy

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Love & Peace, 6'x3' – Acrylic

San Francisco State University – Office of Professor Dina Ibrahim, March 2003

## Internet resources:

Islamic Art & Architecture Organization

[www.islamicart.com](http://www.islamicart.com)

Los Angeles County Museum

[www.lacma.org](http://www.lacma.org)

Mamoun Sakkal Design

[www.sakkal.com](http://www.sakkal.com)

Fayeq Oweis

[www.oweis.com](http://www.oweis.com)